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24
SEP

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



image COMICS PRESENTS:

"the HUNT"

PART 4



story & art
TODD McFARLANE

special thanks to
GREG CAPULLO

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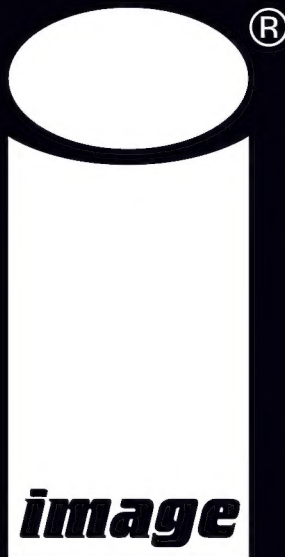
color
STEVE OLIFF
and **OLYOPTICS**

Dedicated to:
JOE SINNOT

FOR IMAGE COMICS
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IT'S BEEN A VERY STRANGE NIGHT FOR DETECTIVE SAM BURKE. WHILE HUNTING THE MYSTERIOUS COSTUMED VIGILANTE RESPONSIBLE FOR BURKE'S TEMPORARY SUSPENSION FROM THE POLICE FORCE, BURKE AND HIS PARTNER-- "TWITCH" WILLIAMS-- UNEXPECTEDLY FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A MUCH BIGGER SCENARIO.

VARIOUS SOURCES LED THEM TO THE LAIR OF A HERO REVERED BY THE HOMELESS OF NEW YORK'S BOWERY. THEY CAUGHT HIM OFF-GUARD AS HE PREPARED FOR A SHOWDOWN TWO MILES UPTOWN WITH THE MAFIA'S CYBORG HITMAN, OVERTKILL. SPAWN EVADED THE PURSUIT.

THE LAWMEN LATER CAUGHT UP WITH SPAWN AS HIS BATTLE REACHED ITS CLIMAX. WILLIAMS' SHARPSHOOTING SAVED SPAWN'S LIFE-- AND THAT OF ONE OTHER. ALSO LYING IN A BLOODY HEAP WAS AN UNIDENTIFIED CIVILIAN.

AS BURKE STARES DOWN AT THE TWO BROKEN FIGURES, HE MUTTERS HIS PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT:

CRIPES!

THE
PAPERWORK
ON THIS IS
GONNA KILL
ME.

SO IT
WOULD
SEEM,
SIR.

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE'S NOT EVEN REMOTELY AWARE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF WHAT'S JUST HAPPENED.

HE'LL CATCH ON
SOON ENOUGH.





KNEELING OVER SPAWN'S LIMP FORM, 'TWITCH' CHECKS FOR ANY SIGNS OF LIFE. IT'D BE A SHAME TO HAVE COME THIS FAR AND END UP WITHOUT ANY ANSWERS.

THE SEARCH HAS BECOME TOO PERSONAL TO GO UNRESOLVED.

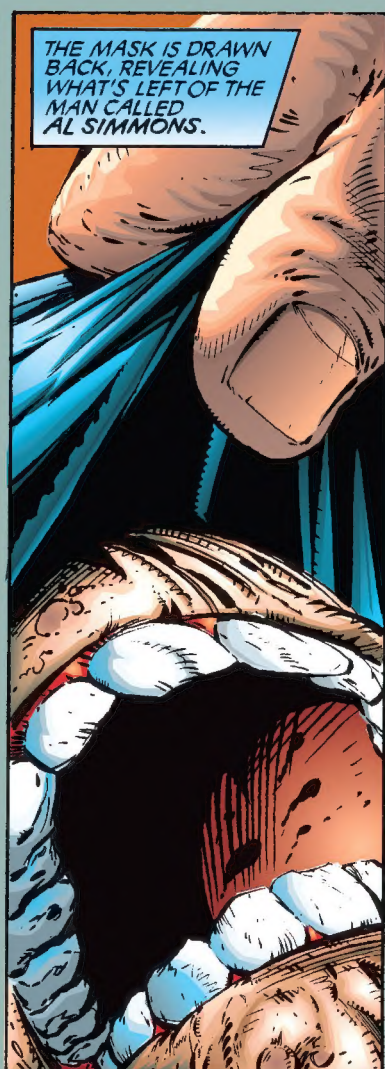


SO...
WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

HE MIGHT
BE DEAD.

I'M NOT
FINDING A
PULSE.

I'LL
TRY SOME
C.P.R.



THE MASK IS DRAWN
BACK, REVEALING
WHAT'S LEFT OF THE
MAN CALLED
AL SIMMONS.



JEEZUS!!

WHAT THE HELL
HAPPENED
TO HIM?!

MY
GOD..



IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE BURNED HIS FACE OFF. GOD... WHAT'S THIS GUY *BEEN* THROUGH?

IF WHAT HE SAID WAS TRUE,* A WHOLE LOT.

THE ONLY OTHER THING WE'VE GOT IS THAT THE BAG LADY CALLED HIM "AL."

* LAST ISSUE -- TOM.



AL?

"AL"... THE RE-ANIMATED DEAD MAN... HAS BEEN HUNTED AS A VIGILANTE AND A MURDERER. AS A SPAWN OF HELL, HE IS LESS THAN THAT-- AND MORE.

TERRY FITZGERALD ROLLS OVER. THE DETECTIVES ASSUME HE'S A BUSINESSMAN. IN FACT, HE WORKS AS A LINGUIST FOR THE C.I.A.

AL?

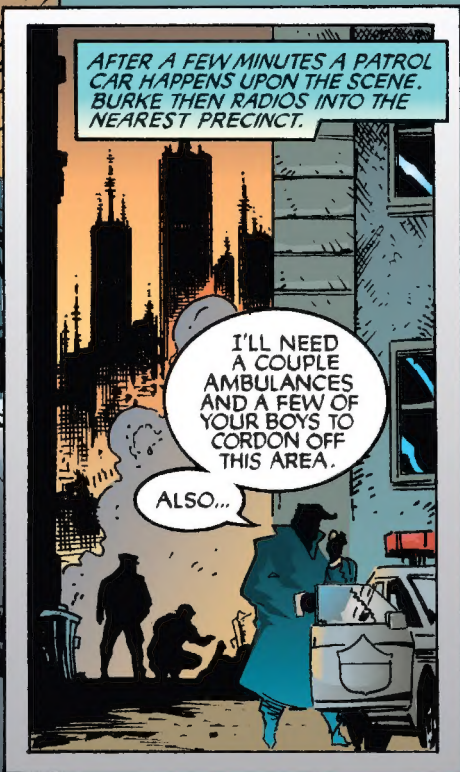
THE DETECTIVES HAD BEEN SO ENGROSSED WITH SPAWN THEY'D MOMENTARILY FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIM.



SO! YOU'RE ALIVE, BUD! GOOD-- 'CAUSE I'VE GOT ABOUT TWO HUNDRED QUESTIONS I NEED ANSWERED.

URK!

...LIKE, WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?!



AFTER A FEW MINUTES A PATROL CAR HAPPENS UPON THE SCENE. BURKE THEN RADIOS INTO THE NEAREST PRECINCT.

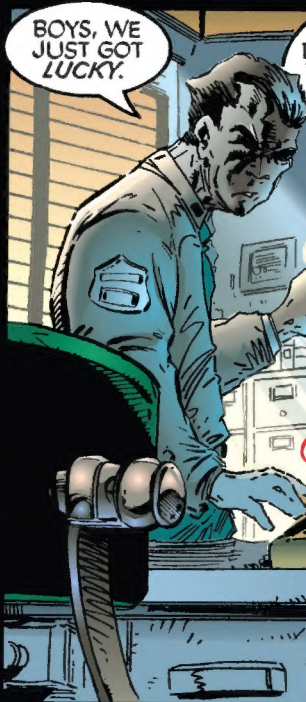
I'LL NEED A COUPLE AMBULANCES AND A FEW OF YOUR BOYS TO CORDON OFF THIS AREA.

ALSO...



-- GET ME EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON A **FITZGERALD, TERENCE D.** HE SAYS HE'S WITH THE **C.I.A.**, THOUGH HE AIN'T GOT A WALLET TO PROVE IT.

THANKS.



BOYS, WE JUST GOT **LUCKY.**

A COUPLE DETECTIVES FROM DOWNTOWN SAY THEY'VE GOT THAT **FITZGERALD** GUY, AND THEY DON'T SEEM TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM MURDERING THOSE **FEDS.** *

GET FOUR UNITS DOWN THERE. I'M GOING TO STEAL THIS COLLAR OUT FROM UNDER THEIR NOSES.

CLICK

* ISSUE 22 -- TONY



I'LL PHONE **LOU** AT THE AGENCY--TELL HIM TO PASS THE WORD.

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE TO FINALLY NAIL THAT **TRAITOR.**

NOT LONG AFTER, AT THE OMNI-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, THE UNITED STATES SECURITY GROUP...



YOU WANTED TO SEE US, **MR. WYNN?**



THEY'VE FOUND **FITZGERALD**, DOWN NEAR PENN STATION. I WANT OUR PEOPLE DOWN THERE NOW.

ONCE THERE, **PULL RANK.**

HE'S **OURS!**

THIS TIME I'M GOING TO **FRY** THAT SONUVABITCH.



YOU MAKE SURE THAT AREA IS SO TIGHT THAT THE **WIND** CAN'T EVEN GET OUT.

I WON'T LOSE HIM AGAIN.

JASON WYNN HAS
BECOME CONSUMED
WITH THIS CASE.

HIS FAUX PAS OVER
TERRY FITZGERALD
THREATENS HIS
CAREER.

AND... IF HE SO
MUCH AS LOOKS AT YOU
CROSSEYED, MAKE SURE
HIS DEATH LOOKS
LIKE AN ACCIDENT.

DO YOU
READ
ME?

PERFECTLY,
SIR.

ANYTHING
ELSE?

JUST
DO IT.

HE KNOWS
FITZGERALD IS NO
TRAITOR, BUT
CIRCUMSTANCES MADE
HIM THE LOGICAL
SUSPECT. RATHER THAN
ADMIT HIS ERROR, WYNN
CONTINUES TO CONDUCT
A BRUTAL INVESTIGATION.

POLICE, F.B.I. ... ALL ARE
CALLED INTO PLAY.

WYNN'S CALLOUSNESS
IS A BYPRODUCT OF
YEARS OF UNQUES-
TIONED AUTHORITY.

AS SUPREME DIRECTOR
OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE
AGENCIES, HE HAS
SINGLE-HANDEDLY
ENDED WARS... EVEN
SOME HE BEGAN.

TERRY FITZGERALD
IS ONLY ONE MAN.
HIS LIFE MEANS
NOTHING TO A
DICTATOR WHOSE
EFFECTIVENESS IS
BEING QUESTIONED.

A QUICK RESOLUTION
TO THIS FIASCO WILL
RESTORE HIS PREEM-
INANCE WITH THE
WHITE HOUSE, AND
IN THE GLOBAL
COMMUNITY...

...WHILE LEAVING IT TO
OTHERS TO DEAL
WITH ITS AFTERMATH...



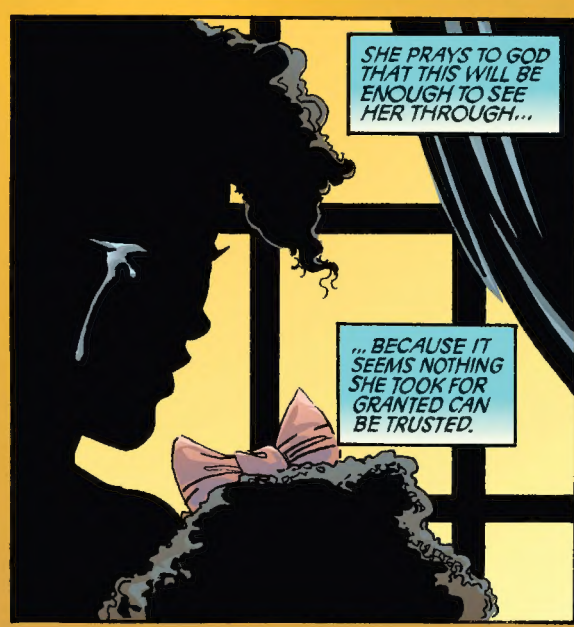
...LIKE WANDA BLAKE, WIFE OF
A MAN NOW ACCUSED ALSO OF
MURDERING TWO F.B.I. AGENTS.

TEARS FALL AS SHE PRAYS
THAT THIS IS JUST SOME
DEMENTED NIGHTMARE...
BUT SHE KNOWS THAT
IT'S REAL.

VERY REAL.

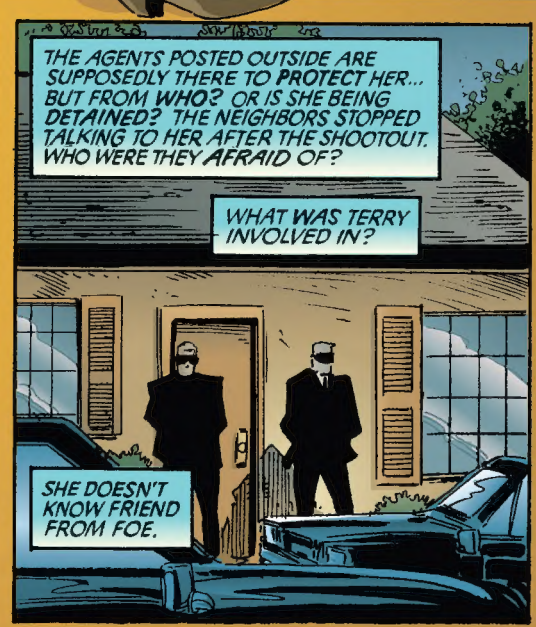
THE LIFE
SHE AND TERRY
HAD BUILT
HAS CRASHED
DOWN AROUND
HER. AS
WANDA NOW
HOLDS TIGHT
TO HER DAUGHTER
CYAN, SHE
WORKS TO PUSH
PAST THE SHOCK...
TO FOCUS ON
WHAT'S IN
HER HEART:

HOPE.
LOVE.



SHE PRAYS TO GOD
THAT THIS WILL BE
ENOUGH TO SEE
HER THROUGH...

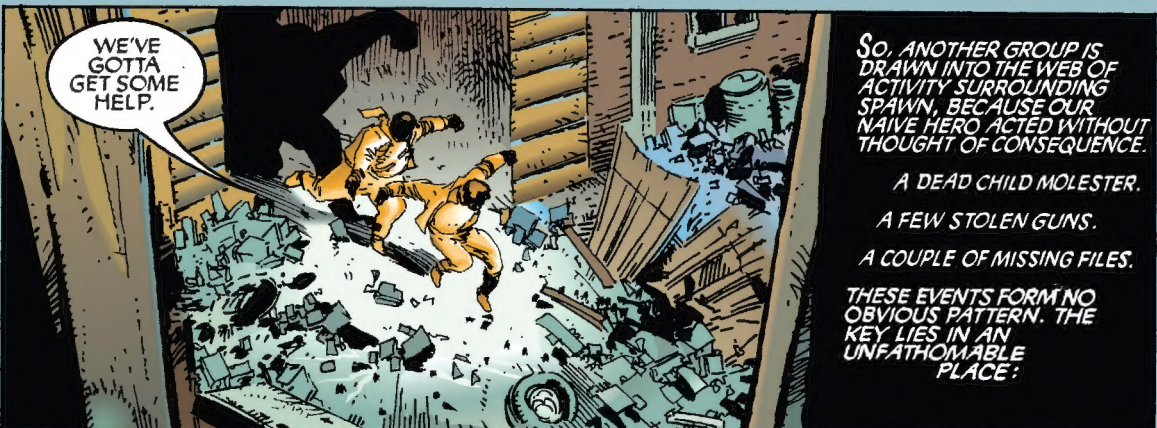
...BECAUSE IT
SEEMS NOTHING
SHE TOOK FOR
GRANTED CAN
BE TRUSTED.



THE AGENTS POSTED OUTSIDE ARE
SUPPOSEDLY THERE TO PROTECT HER...
BUT FROM WHO? OR IS SHE BEING
DETAINED? THE NEIGHBORS STOPPED
TALKING TO HER AFTER THE SHOOTOUT.
WHO WERE THEY AFRAID OF?

WHAT WAS TERRY
INVOLVED IN?

SHE DOESN'T
KNOW FRIEND
FROM FOE.



...THE MIND OF A DEAD, C.I.A.-TRAINED ASSASSIN.

FACED WITH ODD SITUATIONS, SPAWN DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE FALLOUT FROM HIS ACTIONS HAS LANDED SQUARELY ON THE SHOULDERS OF HIS BEST FRIEND OF A LIFETIME AGO.

YOU JUST SETTLE DOWN, BUDDY. THE OTHER COPS WILL BE HERE SOON.

BELIEVE US, TERRY, WE'RE JUST AS ANXIOUS TO FIGURE THIS OUT AS YOU ARE.

YOU GUYS HAVE TO BELIEVE ME... I **DON'T** HAVE TIME!

THE MAFIA'S GOT MY WIFE AND KID!!

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

NOW!

LISTEN, PAL!

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS. YOU AIN'T GOING NOWHERE.

UNDER-
STAND?!

PLEASE, SIR, TAKE IT EASY.

BACK OFF, TWITCH! THIS ONE'S BEEN DOGGING ME TOO LONG FOR ME TO LET IT FALL APART NOW!

ARE YOU **DEAF?!** DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID-- IT'S THE MOB, YOU IDIOT!! THEY'LL KILL THEM!

OK, NO. NOT AGAIN...!

FREEZE!

THEY'VE GOT MY WIFE AND LITTLE GIRL! *

WANDA...?

* IT WAS ACTUALLY JUST A BLUFF. SEE ISSUE 22 -- TOM.

IN THE SPRAWLING OFFICE OF NEW YORK MAFIA CHIEF VITO GRAVANO TENSIONS ARE RUNNING HIGH. THOUGH HE LIVED THROUGH HIS ORDEAL WITH THE VIOLATOR AND HIS BROTHER DEMONS*, IT ENDED FAR FROM SATISFACTORILY.

AND NOW THE HEAT'S BEEN TURNED UP. TWO OF HIS BOYS, TAKEN BY SURPRISE, SHOT AND KILLED A PAIR OF FEDERAL AGENTS ON THE FRONT LAWN OF TERRY FITZGERALD'S HOUSE.

OUT OF RESPECT FOR EACH OTHERS' INFLUENCE, THE TWO GROUPS HAVE LONG HAD A "SPECIAL" WORKING RELATIONSHIP. VITO IS LUCKY THAT EVERYONE IS STILL BLAMING FITZGERALD.

HE CAN THANK JASON WYNN FOR THAT.

I SENT FRANKIE AND TOMMY BACK TO THE MURDER SCENE.

THEY'RE MAKING SURE WE STAY CLEAN THROUGH ALL THIS.

AND US?

I WANT YOU TO MAKE SURE OVERTKILL DID HIS JOB. I NEED FITZGERALD DEAD. THE CARTEL HAS BEEN--

* VIOLATOR MINI-SERIES. - Tom.

YES?

THIS IS GINO. WE'VE JUST CALLED A MEETING FOR NEXT THURSDAY. SOME OF THE MEMBERS HAVE REQUESTED A PROGRESS REPORT. THERE'S BEEN UNHAPPINESS WITH YOUR RECENT DEALINGS.

YOU'VE GOT SIX DAYS TO CORRECT THIS, UNDERSTAND?

WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU, VITO.

CLICK

PERFECT!!

GRAVANO IS NOT USED TO BEING ON THE RECEIVING END OF THREATS.

NOR WILL HE ALLOW IT TO CONTINUE.


SLAM!

SEND SOMEONE
OVER TO GINO'S
RESTAURANT. TAKE HIS
TOP CHEF AND SLICE OFF
HIS HANDS.

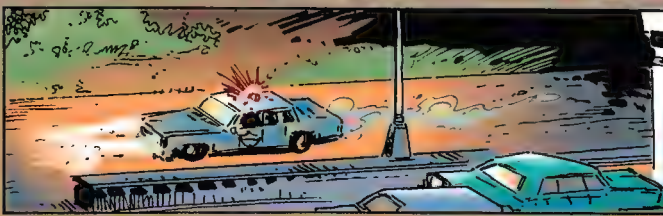
GINO NEEDS
TO UNDERSTAND
WHO *RUNS*
THIS SHOW.

IN THE
MEANTIME, I
WANT FITZGERALD'S
BODY. TELL OVERTKILL
TO LEAVE ENOUGH OF
IT INTACT FOR ME TO
TAKE TO MY MEETING
ON THURSDAY.

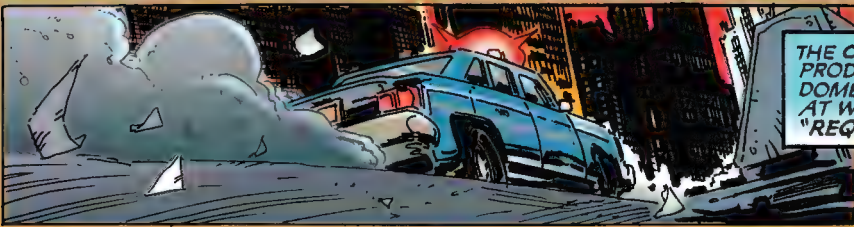
THAT SHOULD SHUT THEM UP.



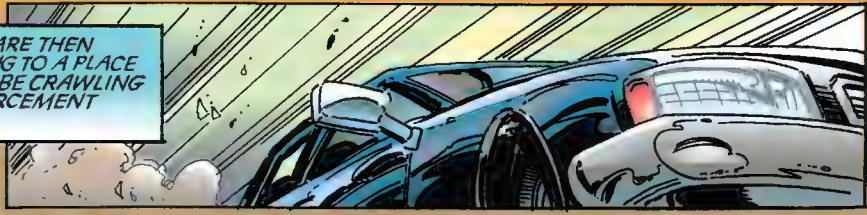
UNFORTUNATELY FOR
TWIST, THAT MAY NOT
BE AS EASY AS IT
SEEMS. RIGHT NOW,
FITZGERALD IS A VERY
HOT COMMODITY.



THE POLICE BELIEVE HE'S
IN POSSESSION OF
STOLEN EXPERIMENTAL
FIREARMS. THE F.B.I.
SUSPECT HIM OF KILLING
TWO OF THEIR AGENTS.



THE C.I.A. IS
PRODDING THESE
DOMESTIC AGENCIES
AT WYNN'S
"REQUEST."



TWIST'S GOONS ARE THEN
RACING HEADLONG TO A PLACE
THAT WILL SOON BE CRAWLING
WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICERS.



ADDING TO THE FRAY WILL BE
EVERY LOCAL MEDIA CREW
THAT'S BEEN MONITORING THE
POLICE BANDS.

THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE
THE EASIEST TIME TO BE
TERRY FITZGERALD.

THOUGH DETECTIVE SAM BURKE HAS HAD A VERY SUCCESSFUL CAREER, ONE POINT CANNOT BE DENIED: HE'S AN OVERWEIGHT SLOB.

FOR HIM, "PURSUING A SUSPECT ON FOOT" IS A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS. THAT'S WHY HE WAS TEAMED WITH SCRAWNY "TWITCH" WILLIAMS...

...TO WHOM IT FALLS (YET AGAIN) TO CATCH UP WITH A FLEEING PERPETRATOR (ALLEGED).

puff<
puff<

PRECINCT, BY PRECINCT, THE QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED, "WHY DO THEY CALL HIM 'TWITCH'?"

puff<

THE ANSWER:

"BECAUSE HE *DOESN'T*."

IT'S OVER, TERRY.

ACCEPT IT.

TERRY SLUMPS TO THE GROUND, A BROKEN MAN. PUTTING HIS HEAD INTO HIS HANDS, HE BEGINS TO SOB. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHY ANY OF THIS IS HAPPENING. THINGS ARE SO OUT OF WHACK.

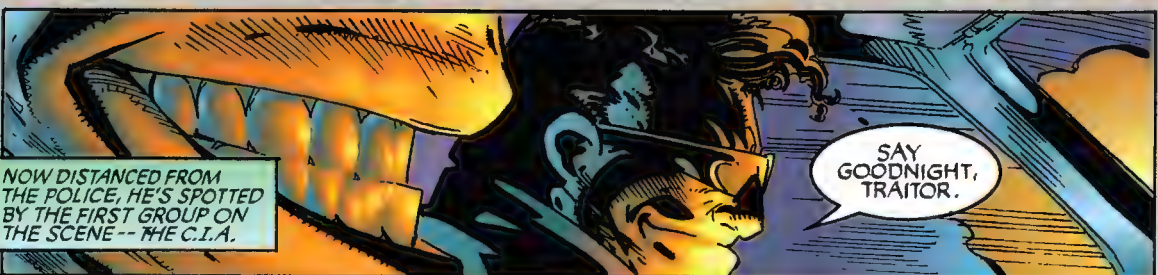
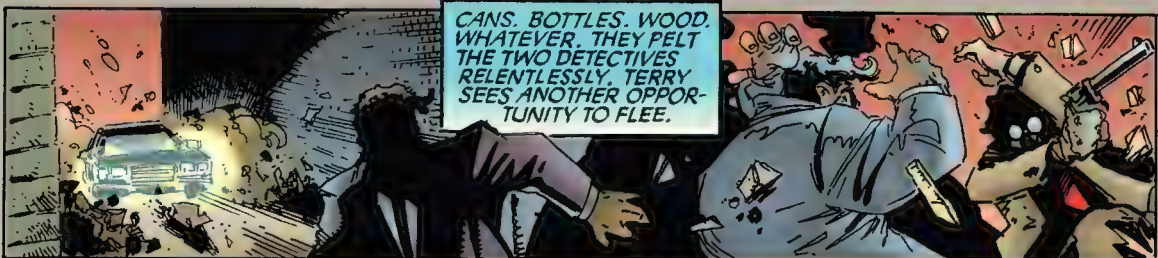
BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE HAS FAILED HIS WIFE AND CHILD. THAT IS MORE THAN HE CAN BEAR.

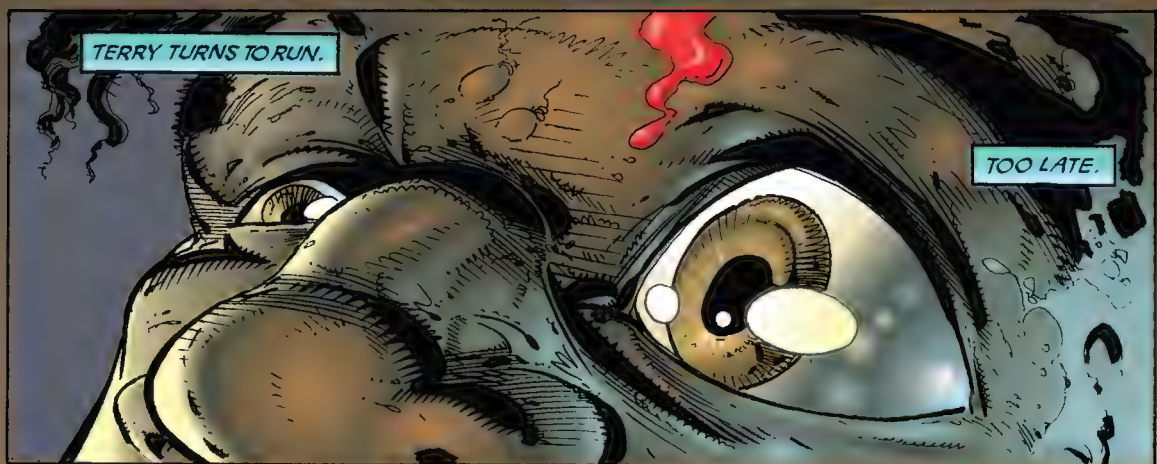
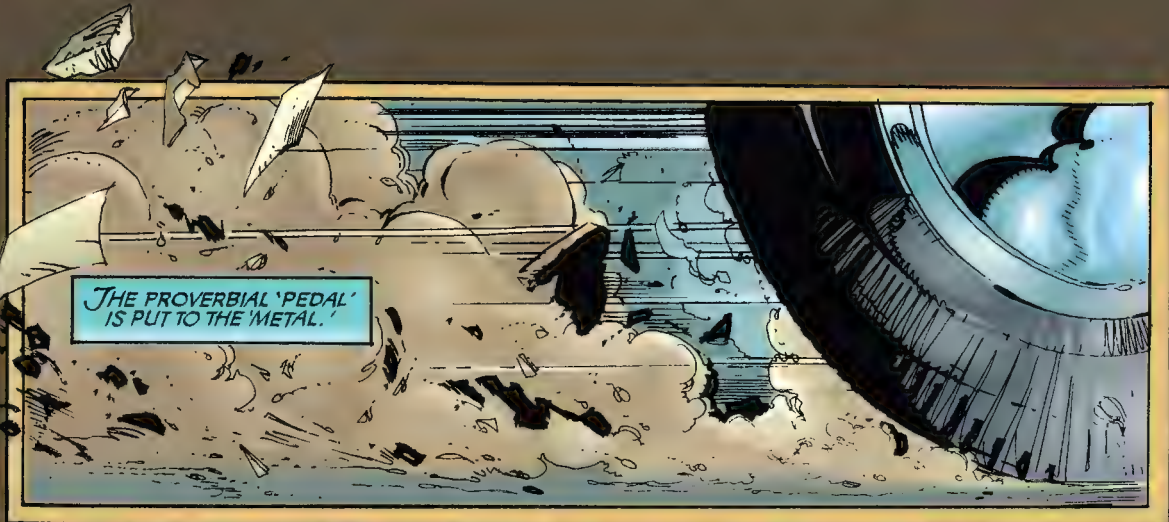
WANDA, PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

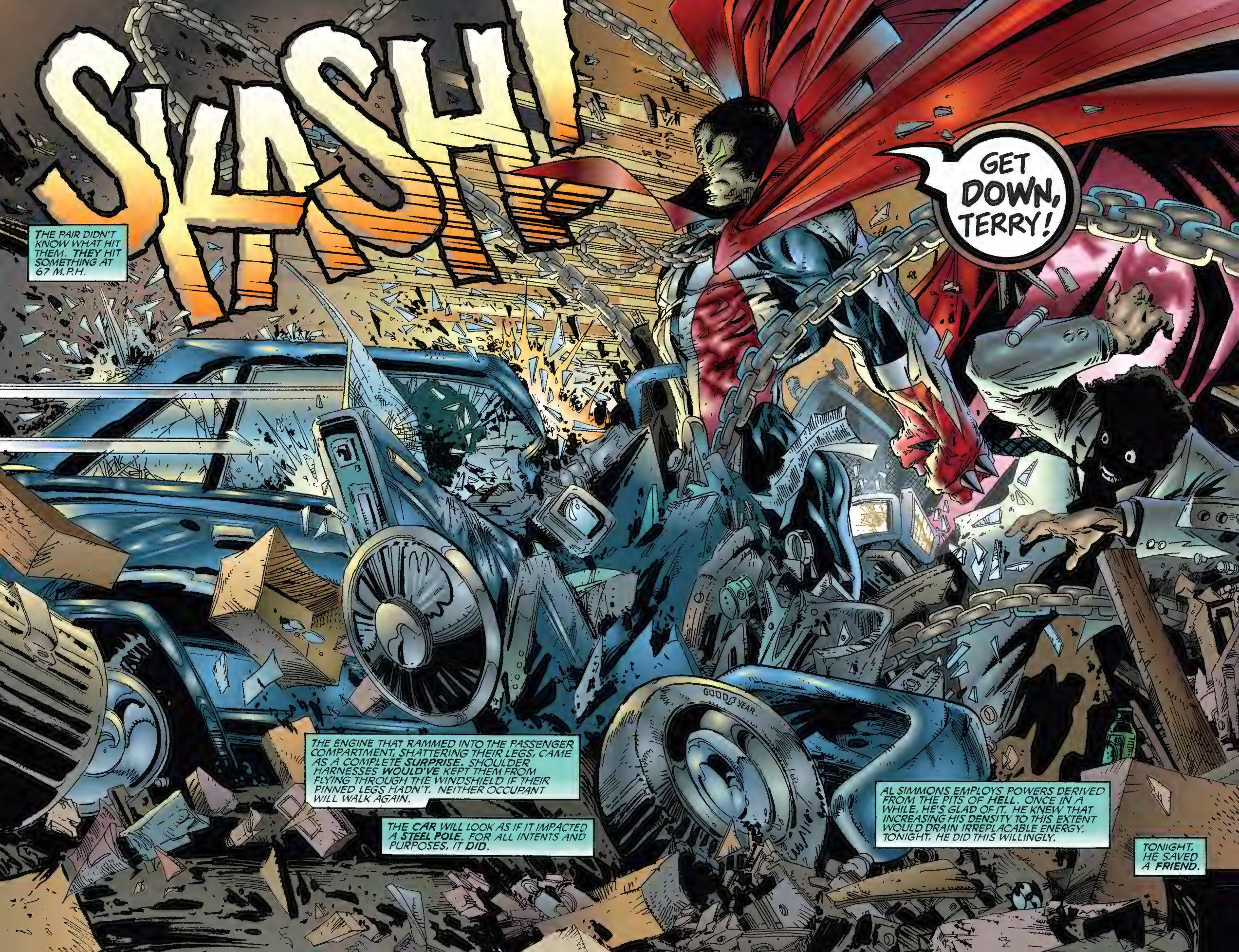
YOU >huff< GOT 'IM! GREAT... WORK...! >huff-ff<

I... THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HAVE >huff< A HEART... ATTACK...

GOOD FOR YOU, SIR.







THE PAIR DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HIT THEM. THEY HIT SOMETHING AT 67 M.P.H.

GET DOWN, TERRY!

THE ENGINE THAT RAMMED INTO THE PASSENGER COMPARTMENT, SHATTERING THEIR LEGS, CAME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE. SHOULDER HARNESSES WOULD'VE KEPT THEM FROM FLYING THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD IF THEIR PINNED LEGS HADN'T. NEITHER OCCUPANT WILL WALK AGAIN.

THE CAR WILL LOOK AS IF IT IMPACTED A STEEL POLE. FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, IT DID.

AL SIMMONS EMPLOYS POWERS DERIVED FROM THE PITS OF HELL. ONCE IN A WHILE, HE'S GLAD OF IT. HE KNEW THAT INCREASING HIS DENSITY TO THIS EXTENT WOULD DRAIN IRREPLACABLE ENERGY. TONIGHT, HE DID THIS WILLINGLY.

TONIGHT, HE SAVED A FRIEND.

AS THE HORDE CONVERGES UPON HIM, SPAWN STANDS AND STARES. HIS C.I.A. BACKGROUND INFORMS HIS DECISIONS: WHEN TO REACT, AND HOW. HE HAS SEVERAL TARGETS TONIGHT. ONE PURPOSE.

UNTIL NOW, HE TRIED HIDING HIMSELF FROM THE PUBLIC.

THAT HASN'T WORKED VERY WELL.

FEAR.

IT CAN BE BROUGHT ON IN MANY WAYS: IRRATIONAL THOUGHT. PARANOIA. SUPERSTITION.

HE'S BEEN GIVEN A NAME BY THE VIOLATOR. IT'S TIME THEY LEARNED IT...

IT CAN ALSO BE INSTITUTED BY EXAMPLE.

HE NEEDS A NEW TACTIC:

... AS WELL AS SOMETHING ELSE:

THESE ALLEYS BELONG TO SPAWN!

CRIPES. WHAT A NIGHT.

... THAT THE BOOGIE MAN REALLY DOES EXIST.

WHERE'D HE GO?

HE'S GOING TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS THAT MESSAGE.

WITH VARIOUS FILES TAKEN FROM TONY TWIST'S OFFICE, SPAWN HAD BEGUN TO PIECE THINGS TOGETHER. EACH NEW AGENCY DROPPING INTO THE MIX WAS TARGETED AS ANOTHER PLACE FOR AL TO CROSS-CHECK HIS DATA.

FINALLY, ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO ACT AS COURIER.



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AMAZED HOW RELAXED YOU ARE ABOUT DESTROYING PEOPLE.

uh?

SHUT UP.

I'VE SOMETHING TO SAY.

YOU CALL YOUR DOGS OFF THE FITZGERALD CASE. THEN YOU BACKTRACK OVER THAT TWISTED TRAIL OF LIES YOU'VE LAID AND SOMEHOW YOU CORRECT IT. I WANT TERRY FITZGERALD TO BE SO SQUEAKY CLEAN THEY'LL WANT TO GIVE HIM A MEDAL. IN THE FUTURE, YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WILL STAY AWAY FROM HIM AND HIS FAMILY.

IN CASE I HAVEN'T MADE MY POINT, I THOUGHT I'D LEAVE YOU WITH A COPY OF A SPECIAL FILE.

YOU'LL FIND THAT YOUR CAREER OF WEALTH AND POWER WILL VANISH IF ANYONE READS IT. THE PRESIDENT AND THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF WOULD BE THE FIRST.

I KNOW WHAT MAKES YOU TICK, JASON...

WHA...? HOW'D YOU...!



...AND THAT'S POWER.

THIS FILE CAN MAKE IT DISAPPEAR IN A HEARTBEAT.

JASON WYNN SCANS THE FILE. NO ONE ALIVE KNEW SOME OF THE ITEMS IT CONTAINS.





MMM...
SAUERKRAUT...
SWISS CHEESE...
oh! oh! oh!
PICKLED
HERRING!

IT'S 4:33 a.m.
SAM BURKE
HAS FINALLY
ARRIVED IN
HIS APART-
MENT...

BURKE...

CRIPES!

WHAT
KINDA
GHOST FREAK
ARE YOU?!!

I NEED YOU TO PASS
A MESSAGE ALONG TO CHIEF
BANKS. TELL HIM TO DROP
THE FITZGERALD CASE...

...AND TO
LEAVE MY ALLEY
ALONE.

IF HE DOESN'T,
I'LL MAKE SURE
EVERY CRIMINAL IN
A TEN BLOCK RADIUS
TURNS LEFT EVERY
TIME A COP GOES
RIGHT.

YOU'LL
BE SO BUSY
CHASING THE MOB
I'LL BECOME A
DISTANT
MEMORY.

AND
DO ME A
FAVOR...



... GIVE
THIS FILE
TO CHIEF
BANKS.

I'D HATE
TO SEE WHAT
THE MEDIA WOULD
MAKE OF HIS
RANGE OF 'EXTRA-
CURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES.'

IF HE'S
SMART, I
WON'T HAVE
TO DISTRIBUTE
COPIES.

CRIPES.



VITO GRAVANO SITS SWEATING
IN HIS PRIVATE SAUNA. HE
FINDS IT THERAPEUTIC TO
OUTLINE HIS ONGOING
ACTIVITIES IN SUCH HEAT.

HEY,
FAT MAN.

LET'S
CHAT.

DEAR
GOD
ABOVE.

YOU WILL
CEASE AND DESIST
IN YOUR IDIOTIC
HOUNDING OF TERRY
FITZGERALD. **NOW.**
YOUR RATS HAVE GIVEN
YOU BAD
INFORMATION.
HE'S HUMAN.

I'M
NOT.

AND JUST
TO MAKE YOUR
DAY, HERE'S A FILE I
BORROWED FROM
YOUR OFFICE. I SEE IT
LAYS OUT YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S
OBJECTIVES FOR
THE NEXT SIX
MONTHS.

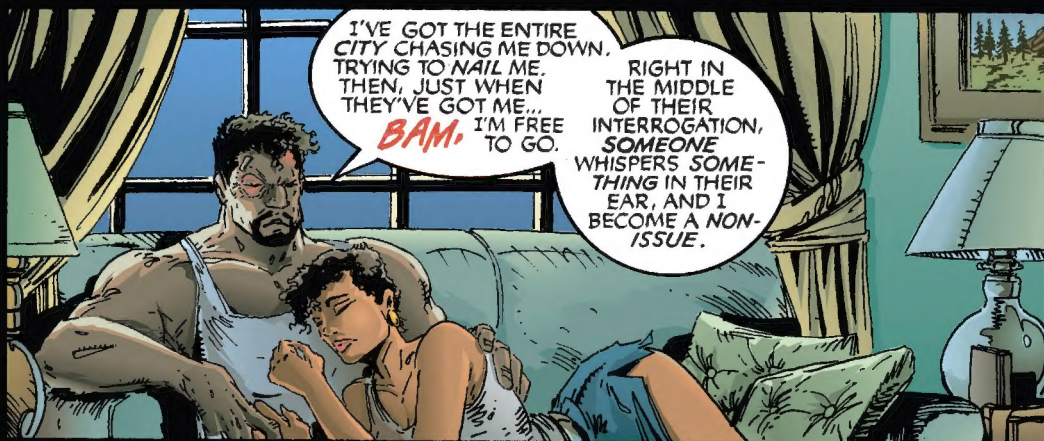
UNLESS
YOU WANT THE
COPS CRAWLING
UP YOUR REAR
YOU'LL LEAVE
FITZGERALD
ALONE.

ok...
AND STAY
THE HELL
OUT OF MY
ALLEYS.

AT THE HOME OF
TERRY FITZGERALD
AND HIS WIFE, WANDA
BLAKE, THE EFFECTS OF
SPAWN'S CRYPTIC
VISITS ARE DISCUSSED
IN HUSHED TONES.

IT JUST
DOESN'T
MAKE ANY
SENSE
TO ME.

NONE
OF THIS.



OUTSIDE, IN THE COLD
NIGHT AIR, OUR HERO
PERCHES HIGH ABOVE
HIS WIFE'S HOUSE.

HIS
HOUSE.

OR IS IT.



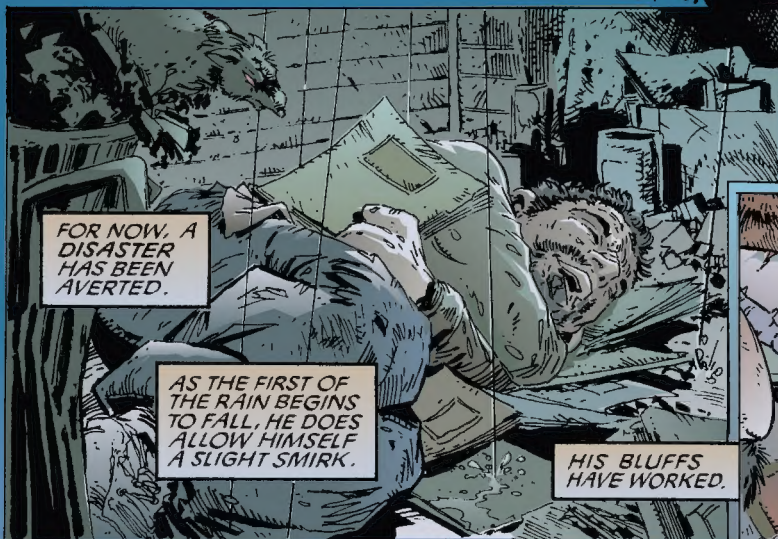
HIS LIFE IS
SO TWISTED
NOW, HE
CAN'T MAKE
SENSE OF IT.

WHILE HE STARES AT THE LIGHT STREAMING
FROM THE HOUSE THAT WAS ONCE HIS,
AL SIMMONS REFLECTS THAT HIS EXISTENCE
IS CERTAINLY HAVING AN IMPACT-- AND
THAT MOST OF IT'S NEGATIVE.

HE'LL BE MORE CAREFUL IN THE
FUTURE. HIS ACTIONS HAVE
CAUSED HIS WIFE AND FRIEND
TO SUFFER GREATLY.

SOUNDS FUNNY, HE THINKS,
I HAVE A WIFE THAT'S MARRIED
TO SOMEONE ELSE.

HE'LL LAUGH ABOUT THAT
SOME OTHER TIME.



FOR NOW, A
DISASTER
HAS BEEN
AVERTED.

AS THE FIRST OF
THE RAIN BEGINS
TO FALL, HE DOES
ALLOW HIMSELF
A SLIGHT SMIRK.

HIS BLUFFS
HAVE WORKED.



HE'LL WORRY
ABOUT EVERYTHING
ELSE TOMORROW.



The END.



Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE